

Youth



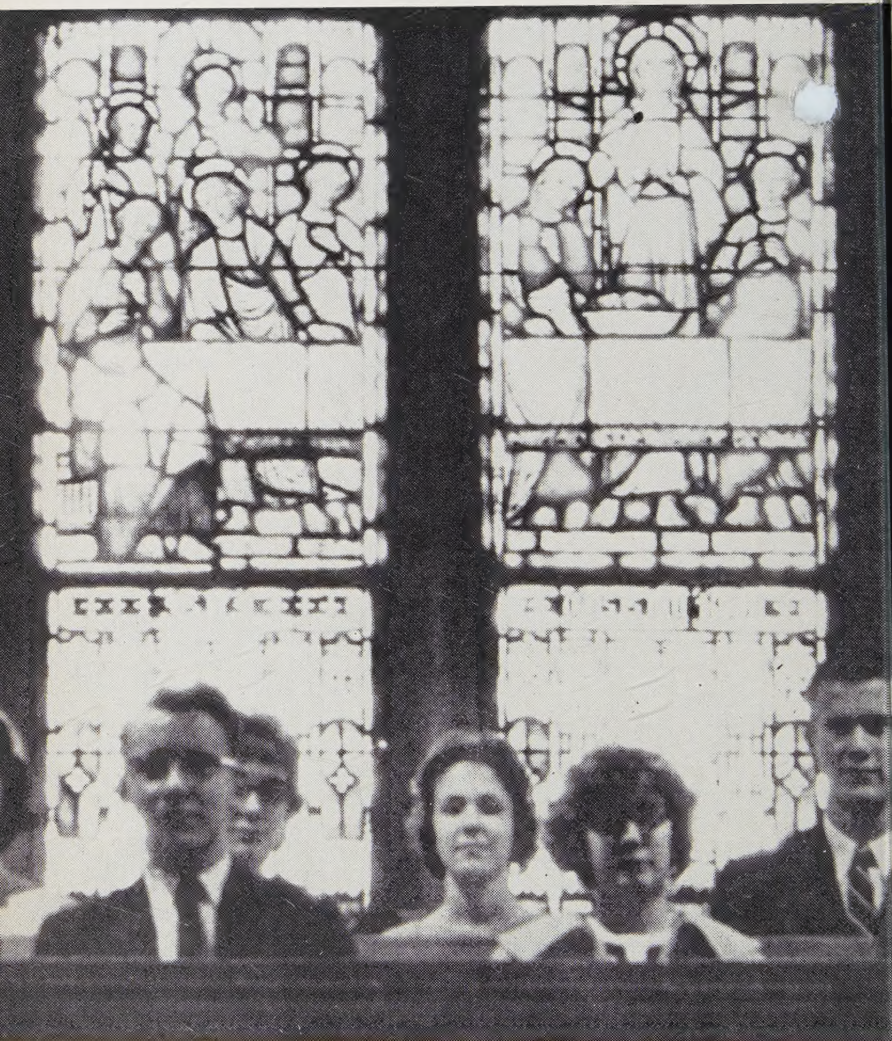
Religious Education
EXHIBIT
Pacific School of Religion

Is God alive?
Or do you care?

Needed: A hot line
from pew to pulpit

Ohio teens stage
an original musical

You've got a hot li



Don't always blame the preacher if

from the pew to the pulpit . . .



Did it ever occur to you that the youth of a church share in its preaching ministry? Well, they do—at least in a congregation that's alive to what is going on in the world. The spirit of a church's young people gets into the preacher's sermons, even if their bodies never get into the pulpit. They keep the preacher and the church young, dynamic, and forward-looking.

We are so used to thinking that the minister makes a church what it is that we forget that the *church* also makes a *minister* what *he* is. Since the young people are a vital and influential force in any congregation, it follows that they help to make the minister what he is. They even affect the content and form of his sermons. Through him they also preach.

Scarcely anyone realizes this, least of all the young people themselves. I doubt whether it ever dawned on you that you had anything to do with the preacher's sermon last Sunday morning, or the Sunday before that, or any other Sunday. Maybe some preachers themselves never realize that the youth of their churches do a good deal of the preaching, but from where I sit it seems to me that they do. I've been preaching for nearly a half-century myself and *listening* to sermons much longer than that, and I firmly believe that the people behind the preacher are largely responsible for the preacher behind the sermon.

A Hot Line from Pew to Pulpit. Do you realize that you influence the preacher's sermon just by being in the pew? I don't mean that one teenager sitting in front of him on a certain Sunday will induce the preacher to re-arrange or re-word the sermon he has prepared for that day. But a dozen or 20 or 30 of them sitting out there

mon is dull

Youth

SEPTEMBER 15, 1963

Volume 14 Number 17

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Youth magazine is prepared for the young people of the United Church of Christ. Published biweekly throughout the year (except during July and August, when monthly) by United Church Press. Publication office: 1720 Chouteau Avenue, St. Louis 3, Mo. Second class postage paid at Philadelphia, Pa., and at additional mailing offices. Accepted for mailing at a special rate of postage, provided for in Section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized June 30, 1943.

Subscription rates: Single subscriptions, \$3.00 a year. For group rates write for order blank. Single copies, 15 cents each.

Subscription offices: Division of Publication, Board for Homeland Ministries, United Church of Christ, 1505 Race St., Philadelphia 2, Pa., or The Pilgrim Press, 14 Beacon St., Boston 8, Mass.

If something in a sermon

Sunday after Sunday will do something to him—not only during the service, but also in the hours spent in his study preparing to preach. As the minister anticipates the needs of his people on the coming Sunday, he will see in advance those young faces scattered throughout the congregation. Their youthful energy, their helpful outlook, their dreams and determination will seep into the sermon he is planning. Some of their language and thought-forms will creep into his manuscript, if he writes his sermons out. If these young people are in the pew Sunday after Sunday, they will be in the preacher's mind as he gets ready on Tuesday or Wednesday to talk to them the next Sunday. He can hear his young people talk back to him over the hot line between the pew and the pulpit. They may not speak out and interrupt him in the midst of his sermon, but he has many ways of hearing them talk back to raise objections and ask questions about what he is saying. He knows he can't put anything into that sermon that won't interest those young listeners and make sense to them. He wants to catch their ears and convince their minds and hearts.

Asking Questions: Do you realize that you also help the pastor in his preaching when you show an interest in his sermons? I don't mean that he wants from you a polite "I enjoyed your sermon today." Most preachers would be glad to exchange that bromide from 40 mature listeners for one honest, though awkward comment from a junior high or senior high student. Nothing warms the cockles of a preacher's heart so much as a gleam in the eye of some young fellow or girl whose imagination has been caught by something in the sermon. It may call forth a question or a protest from a youthful worshiper, but the preacher gets a real boost when he finds that he has struck fire.

Perhaps the question or the objection is too big to be put into a sentence at the church door. Maybe you should ask the pastor for a chance to talk with him later, or even go to see him

uzzles you, talk to your pastor about it.

without appointment. When I was a pastor (I spent 26 years at it), I was thrilled if a youth of my parish rang my doorbell just to talk about something I had said in a sermon that he didn't understand or couldn't accept. You have no idea how glad your pastor would be to "chew the fat" with you over a point in one of his sermons that troubles you. You will help him to know what goes on in the minds of his young listeners and by means of that knowledge to come up with more helpful sermons.

You Problems Are His Problems. Do you realize that you can also get into the pulpit of your church by laying before your minister the problems that perplex you—problems that he might help you and other young people to solve? Some of your problems may need to be handled in a youth forum, but others may be the basis of sermons suitable for young and old.

If I were a pastor today, I'd welcome with all my heart the suggestions of the youth of my parish for sermon themes. I'd want to know of their deepest concerns, and I'd make them my concerns. A pastor makes the burdens of all his people, including the young, his own burdens. So do not hesitate to ask your minister to preach on the problems that stump you.

Your Youth Group Is in It, Too. And do you realize that your church's youth fellowship may also get into the act—the preaching act, that is? I don't mean once a year on Youth Sunday when the minister occasionally asks several young people to take parts in the service, perhaps even the sermon. I mean that the preacher's message all the year round may be affected by his contacts with the youth fellowship and its program, if those contacts are intimate and wholesome. In some churches there is a fine spirit of teamwork between the pastor and the youth group. He may be the spark plug of the young people's program. If you have such a pastor, your youth group is already doing a good deal of preaching from your pulpit.

But if your pastor does not keep in such close touch with your youth fellowship, don't conclude that he doesn't care about you and what you are doing. Maybe he is trying to give you a free hand, a chance to work out a program of your own. Maybe in order not to dominate your program, he is leaning over backward to put you on your own. Maybe he'd welcome an invitation to pitch in and help you at points where *you'd* like his guidance. Often a pastor must choose between imposing himself on the young people's program and keeping himself out of the picture so that they'll assume responsibility and grow more mature and competent in so doing. Feel free, therefore, to take the initiative when you want him in your work or play, your study or worship. He may be glad to get in on your plans, and in strange, unforeseen ways all that is healthy and creative in your youth group will find expression in the pastor's sermons when you least expect it.

So you're something of a preacher, even though you never recognized it. You may not be trained for it, or ordained to it, but a little bit of you may be in next Sunday's sermon, and the sermon may be all the better for your share in it.

—ALFRED N. SAYRES

Sportswriters interview . . .

"famous figures"

Sportswriters are a separate breed. Their style is personal and often flowery. And the coaches and players they interview always seem to have the same answers. And so we wondered what some famous figures of history, past and present, might have said if they had been interviewed by sportswriters.

David, just before his bout with Goliath—"I know that the experts are picking the big guy to kayo me in the first round, but I honestly expect to win. I've been working on a secret weapon, see."

Marc Antony, upon returning to Rome from Egypt—"Those stories about my breaking the club's curfew rule are a lot of baloney. What's more, Cleopatra and I are just good friends."

Thomas Jefferson, announcing the Louisiana Purchase—"Our league believes in orderly expansion. This move gives us another strong franchise. New Orleans has proved that it is ready for the big-time."

Marie Antoinette, during the French Revolution—"Certainly we've been losing, but there's no reason to hit the panic button. I'm sure we'll get back on the winning track if we all can keep our heads."



S. BULL



BILL TELL

William Tell, about to shoot the apple from his son's head—"No, the pressure doesn't bother me. I'm not going to try any fancy deliveries today. I plan to stick with the fast, straight one. If my control is good, we'll be all right."

Napoleon, retreating from Moscow—"Let's face it. My boys simply couldn't move on a frozen field. I guess we're a warm-weather club."

The Wright Brothers, before the historic flight at Kitty Hawk—"Our prospects may not appear very bright, but we feel we have a chance to climb. After all, we have nowhere to go but up."

Chief Sitting Bull, after *Little Big Horn*—"Custer's outfit was overconfident. The palefaces figured that this one would be a breather, and my kids just out-hustled them."

General Washington—announcing that the Marquis de Lafayette had become an officer in the Continental Army—"He's the most promising rookie I've seen in a long time. The kid's only 20, but his record in the French League indicates that he's ready. I'm going to put him in the starting line-up right away."

Peter Minuit, after buying Manhattan Island from the Indians for trinkets worth \$24—"We did a lot of dickering before we made the deal. At first, the Indians wanted players, but I didn't want to weaken our club. Finally, they agreed to a cash transaction. The price was



LITTLE DAVE

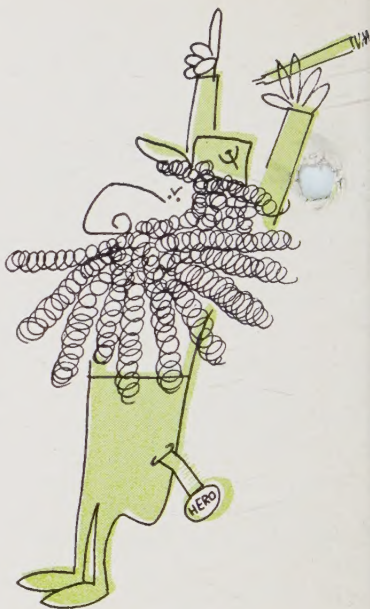
pretty high, but I'm sure we'll get the money back at the gate."

William the Conqueror, after the Battle of Hastings—"The English first team wasn't bad, but the bench strength just wasn't there. I figured we'd wear them down with our platoon system, and that's exactly what we did."

Ponce de Leon, searching for the "Fountain of Youth"—"They say I'm washed up, but I know I'm not. If things work out as I hope, I'll be back next season, strong as ever."

Charles de Gaulle, after blocking Great Britain's entrance into the Common Market—"I've got nothing against Britain, understand. It's just that I think Britain needs a bit more experience before being booked for a main event."

Marco Polo, upon returning home from one of his journeys—"These road trips are just too much. If the club owners had any sense, they'd split the league into two divisions."



FIDEL



ALL HEART



PAUL

Fidel Castro, *after the Cuban crisis*—"I know we're just one of several teams in the Soviet farm system, but I don't think it's right for the home office to treat us like bushers. If Khrushchev doesn't send us more help, I'll be forced to break off our working agreement."

Captain Bligh, *after the "Bounty" mutiny*—"These modern kids are spoiled. When I was a rookie, I never would have thought of questioning a manager's moves. Sure, I knew there was dissension on the club, but I could have handled it if only that trouble-maker Fletcher Christian hadn't undermined me. He's the worst clubhouse lawyer I ever encountered."

The Hessian Commander, *after his troops were beaten at the Battle of Trenton*—"Washington's guys were lucky. They caught us before we were properly warmed up.

We deserve a return bout, but Washington probably won't give it to us."

Paul Revere, *following his famous ride*—"They said my horse couldn't run a long race, but he really showed them. He was strong all the way, and not once did I have to go to the whip. That horse is all heart."

Gen. Douglas MacArthur, *after being relieved of his command by President Truman during the Korean War*—"I can't understand it. I had the club in the first division, didn't I? This is a flagrant case of front-office interference."

Leonardo da Vinci, *upon completing the Mona Lisa*—"I'm not going to rush things. A big build-up right now could ruin this outstanding young prospect. But in seasons to come, she'll be a crowd-pleaser."

—EDGAR WILLIAMS



LEO

your world is as big, a

How wide is *your* world? Does it include your home town? Your state? Your country? Does it extend at all beyond the borders of the USA?

In interest and understanding your world can be as big or small as you choose to make it. But in this age of headline headaches, it becomes increasingly difficult to ignore other continents and other conflicts. Even in Any Little Town, USA, there is no permanent escape from the global clamor which every news medium communicates. Nor should there be. For the world of headlines describes a world of people—at once frightening and promising—a world of which we are intimately a part.

Two of your forefathers' most tragic mistakes in this business of international affairs have been a tendency to isolate themselves from the world outside this country and a tendency to search for safe, simple, black and white answers whenever the world did force them to confront it. They frequently forgot the wise warning that "everything is more complicated than most people think." You who gain this *awareness and acceptance of the complexity of things* will have taken the first step toward understanding the world in which you live.

Awareness of *facts*, awareness of *feelings*, awareness of *frustration*. This awareness in triplicate should then form the bases of a healthy international orientation. It's an orientation which requires that we confront the facts of international



In analyzing eve

small, as you make it!



id the mistakes your elders made

Coloring all headlines are the East-West

affairs, in all their complexity; people's interpretations of these facts, in all their variations; and the frustrating insolubility of many of them.

Finding the facts first. As teenagers, you're in an ideal position to consider the facts. You still possess much of the honest objectivity of a "outsider" (to the professional world of international decision-making that is) with almost all the access to necessary information that an "insider" has. Before beginning to make use of this information, however, it's helpful to identify the basic, underlying conflicts which tend to color every specific incident and development which the headlines report. One of them is the East-West struggle; the other is the colonial-anti-colonial struggle, or more precisely, the encompassing problems of emerging nations.

The East-West struggle deserves calm consideration. Communism, in its various manifestations and appeals, needs to be sanely understood. In its economic interpretation of history, in its totalitarian expressions, in its revering the primacy of state over individual, communism does represent a threat to many of the democratic values and institutions which are the foundations of western civilization. It can, however, no longer be seen as an easily-identified evil. Communism, as set forth by Marx and Lenin; communism as it has evolved in the Soviet Union; communism as understood by Tito in Yugoslavia or Mao Tse Tung in China—represent divergent trends.

So when we speak of America "fighting communism" in general or of the United States in a specific conflict with communism in a particular area of the world, such as Cuba or Vietnam, it's important to remember whose brand of communism is being combatted—Mao's or Khrushchev's—what the similarities and differences are and what the comparative dangers may be. Challenging, but enlightening books on the subject for you who'd really like to have your appetite and understanding whetted are *Ideology and Power in Soviet Politics* by Z. Brzezinski (Praeger University Series Paperback, \$1.75) and *Communist China and Asia, A Challenge to American Policy* by A. Doak Barnett (A Vintage Paperback, \$1.85).

The "emerging" nations, with problems of their own, are both the subject and object of the East-West struggle. Whether they be located in Africa, Asia, or Latin America, these new and/or underdeveloped countries face similar dilemmas: problems of economic development; an uneducated electorate; a limited pool of educated, experienced citizens from which leadership can be drawn; a scarcity of technological knowledge and technically-trained persons; a dim awareness of nationhood.

In their quests for solutions and answers, these emerging nations may turn either to East or West for aid—material, financial, technological—advice and examples. They may accept help and employ ideas from one, or both or neither. They may align with one or neither. They may attempt to use the East-West conflict to their advantage, playing off one side against the

uggle and the "emerging" nations.

other. And in each instance and at all costs, they will strive to promote their "sovereign independence" and maintain their national pride. They will wish to grow in the economic and political directions which best suit their unique national heritage and present situation, regardless of how alike or different from ~~the~~ other country's pattern this may be.

The powerful countries in the East-West camps, on the other hand, may also attempt to "use" the developing nations by attaching strings to their aid and advice, by attempting to exercise influence, gain control, or win friends through the material help they are offering. All these forces and factors are at work behind every foreign aid debate in the U. S. Congress and behind every request for aid that a new nation makes. To be conscious of them is to understand more clearly the sometimes contradictory behavior of an African or Asian nation which accepts aid from us with one hand and lashes out at our foreign policies or way of life with the other. Their simultaneous drive for development *and* independent stature frequently conflicts with a larger nation's desire to exercise influence correspondent to the amount of aid it gives. *From Empire to Nation* by Rupert Emerson (Beacon Paperback, \$2.45) gives helpful insights into the history and present problems of the emerging nations.

Where to find the facts: Awareness of the facts of day-to-day events throughout the world can proceed from this understanding of the basic, ongoing struggles between East and West and between the developing nations and the more-established rest of the world. Newspapers are your prime source of information. But not every newspaper qualifies. The most thorough-going, consistently factual coverage of the international scene is found in *The New York Times*. While not all of you have daily access to this publication, a subscription to the *Sunday Times* might be a possibility. Each week it includes a section entitled "News of the Week in Review," which gives the most thorough summary of the week's events available. It's not infallible, but it is good. Correspondents' columns and editorials also appear in the same section.

If the *Times* is not available to you, or if you wish to supplement your local newspaper reading with more detailed magazine reports, several publications can prove helpful. The familiar news magazines, such as *Time*, *Newsweek*, *U. S. News and World Report*, supply extensive surveys of developments around the globe. Whichever one you select, discover and remember its editorial bias, e.g., Republican or Democrat, more liberal or conservative, so that it's coverage can be read in a more accurate light.

Magazines with less "news" material, but more scholarly coverage of significant international events are *The Reporter*, *The New Republic*, and *The New Leader*. Publications which appear on a quarterly or biannual basis and which delve into the facts and explanations of the facts even more

There are no easy answers, but teens

deeply than those noted are *Foreign Affairs*, the *Journal of International Affairs*, *Orbis*, and *World Politics*. These are the best in the field—carefully competent, and scholarly. They don't read as easily as *Time* does, but they're far from impossible for those of you who are interested and willing to stretch. Perhaps it would be helpful to choose one on which to concentrate and become a regular reader of it. Or perhaps your youth fellowship or current events class in school could subscribe to one of them and use it as a source for discussion. In either case, it's good to know of their existence and keep them in mind for future or occasional reference.

Television and radio programs are, of course, an additional important source of the "facts" of international affairs. Make a critical survey of local and network news commentators. Select one who gives a thorough coverage of the world's events and to whom you'd enjoy listening regularly.

With the facts in hand, feelings can hardly be ignored. By "feelings" we mean interpretations of, responses to, and reasons for the facts: your own interpretations of the facts you read about occurrences in other areas of the world; the interpretations given to these same occurrences by the inhabitants of other areas; the "feelings" and beliefs and desires of peoples which caused the events to occur in the first place. This awareness of feelings must come through learning about and understanding the history, culture, present politics and people of a certain geographical area in which events of international concern are occurring.

This might seem as though we're saying, "Become an area expert in every area of the world." Relax. Nothing so strenuous is required. If, however, one area of the world does interest you particularly, pursue that interest in all your reading and listening. If, instead, you prefer to learn a little bit more than surface current events about several areas, certain good, basic books can be suggested. In addition, there are specialized magazines pertaining to each geographical area of the world which are published in the country. Your librarian can refer you to them.

Travel to an area of interest or living, working, or studying there can, of course, add incomparable freshness to one's perspective and insight. But even for those of you who may be fortunate enough to go abroad, prior knowledge will expand your traveler's vision immeasurably.

As a very brief, bibliographical beginning, these books can help lead you to an awareness of "feelings." Africa—I. Wallerstein, *Africa, the Politics of Independence*; Latin America—R. J. Alexander, *Today's Latin America*; Soviet Union—G. W. Kennan, *Russia and the West under Lenin and Stalin*; East Asia—E. O. Reischauer, *The United States and Japan* and the book on China by A. Doak Barnett, suggested above; the Middle East—J. C. Hurewitz, *The Middle East Dilemma*; India and Pakistan—T. Walter Wallban, *A Short History of India and Pakistan*; Western Europe—E. P.

inside track on world understanding.

Carr, *The Twenty Years Crisis*. Again, these and other fine books, many in paperback, could be used as source material for some stimulating youth fellowship discussions.

The frustrations of unsolved problems and long-term struggles. Knowledge of facts and insights into feelings unfortunately do not eliminate frustrations. Knowledge and understanding of other lands and the relations among them are vast strides in a positive direction. But they are not a panacea for the world's problems. One can understand a person, yet disagree with him or simply dislike him. And so it is among nations.

Each fact of the contemporary world must be viewed in the light of the basic conflicts which we've discussed and the complexities of the history, culture, and politics of the areas it affects. With one little fact subject to such a confusing network of causes and effects, it's not difficult to understand why disputes between two countries or universal contentions over matters, such as nuclear testing, are so hard to reconcile. The actors intimately involved, such as statesmen and diplomats, as well as we in the attentive audience of world's peoples, will do well to learn the arts of listening, watching and waiting; of shrewd analysis and patient negotiation; of expecting one step backward for every two forward.

Perhaps Inis Claude in *Swords into Plowshares* summed up the state of our world most cryptically when he wrote that many dilemmas and quarrels are "subject to peaceful perpetuation rather than peaceful settlement. This is not a cynical comment; many of life's problems are meant to be lived with rather than solved, and the urge to have a showdown, to settle the matter one way or the other, is often an unwise impulse in both personal and international affairs."

For youth there is hope. This should not be a discouraging conclusion. The search for understanding of and answers to the problems of the world we live in is an exciting endeavor. As teenagers, you have a fountain of hope in the possibility of plunging into the struggle for awareness years sooner than your elders ever did. By gaining an early and intelligent understanding of the facts and feelings of the world in which you live, you have an increased opportunity to creatively whittle away at the lingering frustrations which exist today. Through this early awareness of a complex world far wider than a home town or even a home country, you may also avoid the pitfalls of international ignorance, nearsightedness, oversimplification and generalization which have led your predecessors into past tragedies and present dilemmas.

There are no easy answers to the proliferation of international problems confronting us. There are immense possibilities for accumulating knowledge and growing in understanding so that the avenues of error gradually narrow and the doors toward cooperation increasingly widen.—KAY LORANS

Is God dead or are men's ideas of God becoming inadequate? Why do so many Christians keep on believing? Is it tradition, or faith, or an illusion? What is the Holy Spirit? What does it mean to be "born again"? Answers to these questions were given by Dr. Lewis S. Mudge in an address at the North American Reformed and Presbyterian Youth Assembly.

Is God alive? Does his existence make a difference? Does he really operate in our lives and in the world? "Yes," we say, "of course." But wait a minute. We answer this question much too easily. We answer, too often, before we understand what the question is. The point is: does it *matter* to us, or to anyone else, whether God "exists" or not? This is a different question from the academic one of whether there is or is not a God. As the 20th century unfolds, we are beginning to suspect that it is the only question that counts. *Does God matter?* Does it make a discernable *difference* to human life whether we say he exists or say he does not?

Our nagging fear about the whole Christian enterprise today is that it may not really matter whether or not a person claims to be a Christian. We wonder, as we seek to commend the Christian faith to others, just what we can point to in order to show that it is a distinctive, difference-making thing to profess the Christian faith. What is the point of

IS GO



ALIVE?



*In a culture that has no room for God, we must
find a way for today of understanding our faith*

affirming belief in God, much less a distinctively Christian belief, if it is chiefly an academic exercise? What is the point of inviting people to church or of going there ourselves? . . . How many Christian congregations that we know are actually in the center of the important things that are happening in the communities where they are set? Does the fact that we belong to some congregation make us *think* that it is a center of significant community life when it really is a kind of dead backwater in the midst of the exciting current of modern life?

Contemporary literature is full of the theme of the God who is absent, the God who does not count, the God who is not concerned with or relevant to actual human problems. But some say: "This is not *my* problem. I am a Christian believer. *My* faith is secure. Questions like these do not afflict me or *my* friends." But is this really so?

It is indispensable to begin in a mood of absolute and complete honesty. Honesty is impossible if, consciously or not, we are saying only what we think we are expected to say, or what we have simply been in the habit of saying for many years. What is the real situation? Does the Christian faith, as we experience and understand it really make a difference for us, or are we traveling on the momentum of past traditions?

Perhaps it is hard for us to admit even to ourselves that we have difficulties of this kind because we suppose that we are the *only* ones who are in doubt about what Christian faith really means. It is easy for a person to look about him and to suppose that other people have wisdom and experience which he himself lacks. A person will go along with the claims of the church, never having discovered the living meaning of God in his own experience, but always supposing that God's presence and power *are* somehow felt and understood by the people sitting next to him, by the people up front, by virtually everybody but himself. If he could only change places with *them*, everything would be all right.

Failing this, he assumes that having more experience, reading more books, and hearing more lectures will somehow, and perhaps rather soon, make the thing clear and vital. But this is not what usually happens. Where God is concerned, there is no changing places and there is no intellectual open sesame. The 17-year-old cannot expect to find the answer handed to him when he is 25. Even retirement and the approach of death do not automatically make the reality and power of God self-evident. On the contrary, in the final writings of many a Christian saint there is a sense of disillusionment and disappointment that their experience has *not* given them more certainty about who God is, and what he is doing.

Are we so sure then? Will it surprise us to be told that doubt and confusion have much company within the church today? The man who has

difficulty vouching for the reality of God in his own experience or insight is no longer automatically outside the Christian club. He is probably in the majority of those inside! Several Christian writers have begun to put this in a way which fits the case exactly. God is not nonexistent. But the God we thought we knew is "dead." The ringing certainty with which our ancestors used to use the great Christian words—justification, redemption, grace, holiness—seems no longer appropriate. What does this mean?

On one point, at least there must be no mistake. The problem we face is not that of apostasy—total desertion of the faith. Christians are *not* denying their faith in droves. Nor are they consciously dishonest in continuing to be members of the church. This makes the situation complex. We are less and less sure we know what religious language means; we even doubt whether we have really experienced God in any clear-cut way, and yet we cling to faith. Indeed, theology thrives. Why, otherwise, would we be so worried about the apparent death of God? If God *seems* "dead," or inactive, Christianity is nevertheless very much alive.

The situation then is this: despite the critics, it cannot be proved that Christianity is simply an illusion, but, on the other hand, the 20th century Christian cannot sit back and assume that his faith is intact, needing only better sermons and better books to get it across. Western civilization as a whole has lost the conviction that God is actual, real, immediate, active. The doubts and confusions we may feel personally are but symptoms of a widespread awareness in the Christian church that we are passing into a new and unknown era, a time in which faith must find a new way of understanding itself.

We feel a deep need for the revitalization of faith, a deep hunger for God. But this will not come cheaply. What we must do is to *begin* to ask whether the Christian faith has any internal resources for facing such a situation; whether, in particular, there is any light to be gained from a new confrontation with the Bible. It is certainly safe to say that the answer will not spring full-grown out of the pages of the New Testament. But, if we approach the Bible honestly, we may gain some sense of direction.

There is a well-known story in the third chapter of John which may speak to our condition." At considerable risk to himself, Nicodemus tumbles through the Jerusalem night, confronts the Christ, and blurts out, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher from God; for no one can do these signs that you do, unless God is with him." For the 20th-century Christian, the meaning of this question is unmistakable. It is not, "How can one prove that God exists?" but "I believe that God exists: only make him real to me, dear to me, a tangible force in the world and in my life."

The answer which Jesus gives is tantalizing. It is the characteristic answer of the New Testament to the kind of question Nicodemus, and we, wish to ask. *The Holy Spirit! God's gift to man of his own being and power in history!* But the answer is as confusing as it is tantalizing, and has been so throughout 2000 years of Christian interpretation. What is the

Being born again means becoming involved in the world in a new and larger way

Holy Spirit? How do you get it? Is it a gift which God capriciously gives to some people only? Is it a gift given only at certain times and places which are invariably *other* than our own time and place? What do we mean by "Spirit" anyway? Is there such a thing? Is this really an answer to the kingdom of despair we feel today?

John's account of the interview between Nicodemus and Christ can help us, but only if we try to grasp the *full* New Testament meaning of being born again by the power of the Holy Spirit. The experience of rebirth is *real*, but we miss the significance of this experience, and even overlook its presence, if we do not understand that the new birth, the new creation, is a much bigger thing than the transformation of any man's personal religious consciousness. It is man's involvement in the recreative work of God in the world. It is our relation to God in person, God the Holy Spirit, at work in nature and in human history.

Paul writes, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature" (2 Cor. 5: 17). How so? Not by literally being fashioned over again out of his chromosomes and genes, but just by *being* "in Christ," that is, involved in the totality of what God is seeking to do for the world and for mankind. To be so involved will make a difference for any man, but not perhaps in the way he first expects. And not, certainly, in such a way as to erase all his doubts or to justify him in feeling superior to other human beings.

The "new creation" is not a work which God completes in certain individuals, thereby exempting them from the difficulties other human beings have to go through. It is a work which he *begins* in those who believe in Jesus Christ. The New Testament is emphatic in indicating that the new creation is yet to be completed, and will be completed only with the coming of the kingdom of God. But in Christ men can participate in what is going on, if they will only open their eyes wide enough to see that God has a purpose not just for them but for *all* men and for *all* creation. And if men are really to see and understand what God is up to, they must be *in* the world of human affairs, not set apart in churchy organizations or false theological securities that blind them to what most human beings are thinking, saying, and doing. In fact the whole point of what Jesus says to Nicodemus about the Holy Spirit is that Nicodemus will find the Spirit neither in the Jewish synagogue nor in his own religious consciousness, but "out there" where human decisions are really made.

This point comes out very clearly when we examine more closely the implications of Jesus' words about "new birth." Birth is not the transformation of an organism into something fundamentally different. Birth is the entry of the existing organism into a new environment. At birth we do not become different persons. But we do discover that we live in a larger

world. Our world is no longer warm, comfortable, encompassing, and complacent. Indeed, it is no longer "ours" at all. It is full of questions, threats, and new possibilities. It is a world which we do not wholly understand. Yet it is a world in which, long before we were aware of it, God was at work calling men to himself. When a grown man is "born again," then this may mean that he, too, becomes aware of his environment in a new and larger way.

Specifically, a man who is thus "reborn" will surely cease to think that God can operate only within the limits of his own personal religious feelings. He will stop agonizing about his doubts. He will stop being self-satisfied about his certainties. He will stop living in a spiritual incubator and he will begin to see the world as it is. He will realize that the Spirit, like the wind which blows where it wills," is to be found in the most unexpected places: within the womb of the church, but perhaps even more beyond.

Here is the key to understanding what the Bible has to offer as an answer to our deadness, our doubt, our despair. The answer is the coming of the Holy Spirit; not an idea *about* God, but God himself, in his very being, in human affairs. But we do not grasp what is meant by the Spirit by examining the concept in isolation, or by thinking of it as a mysterious power that can be pumped into people or church programs in order to revitalize them. We grasp what is meant by the Spirit when we see that it is the activity of God, always going on, always involved with human life at the most creative points, always revolutionary in its effects, never completely predictable. We grasp the point when we see that we are invited to set forth, out of our self-concern, beyond the boundaries of our existing understanding, to the places where the Spirit is already in action. It is we who have to get out of our chairs and move, intellectually as well as literally, to get where the Spirit is working and have it course, like the jet stream, through us.

After all, the passage we have examined comes to a climax in the affirmation that "God so loved the *world* . . ." It does not say here that he loved the church (true though that may be) or that he loved Christians (even though that cannot be denied) but that he loved the *world*. But the world today is in revolution. It just may be that this revolution is, in many of its aspects, God's doing.

May it not be that the reason why so many Christians today feel that God is dead is that they have assumed for too long that the love, power, and action of God can adequately be understood in terms of a limited, culturally-conditioned view of man and creation: the pious world-view of a complacent and apparently dominant "Christian civilization"? Maybe it is *that limited world-view* which is dead, and not God. Maybe the days when God seemed to be alive were not the good old days but the bad old days, because we made God too small, thought of him only in terms of *our* particular church or nation or culture. Maybe the "death of God," in that sense, is only the prelude to our rebirth into a new awareness of his true power and majesty.

—LEWIS S. MUDGE



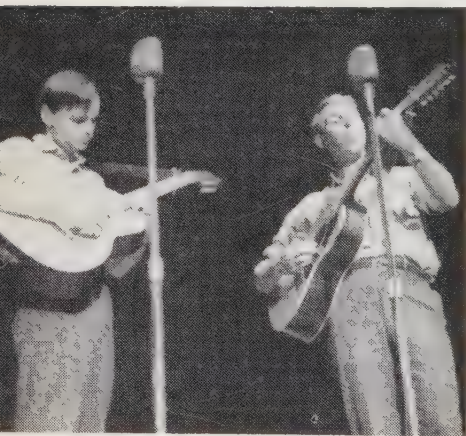
NARPYA

The role of church youth in the ecumenical movement was uppermost in the minds of 1500 delegates attending the week-long World American Reformed and Presbyterian Youth Assembly (NARPYA) on the Purdue University campus at Lafayette, Ind., July 19-25.

Following morning lectures by Dr. Lewis Mudge on the assembly theme, "Come, Creator Spirit," thousands of high school students and young adults gathered in 110 "congregation groups" to consider the question, "What is God calling us to be and do?"

Delegates represented eight countries and nominations in this country and Canada. Also attending were delegates from youth from Presbyterian bodies in England, Ireland, and Scotland, 100 foreign exchange students, and three Roman Catholic young observers. The United Church of Christ was represented by 75 delegates.

The afternoons were given over to a wide range of 25 interest groups, leadership workshops, and creative arts groups. Three major dramas, a feature-length film, and an all-Assembly outdoor party were held in the evenings. A folk-singing team, Steve Addis and Bill Crofut, turned out to be the "heroes" of the week. Delegates agreed that the assembly made them think critically and honestly about their own personal faith and about the church today.



a special offering

In response to the current racial crisis in our nation, the General Synod of the United Church of Christ voted a program of action for "racial justice now." To cover the cost of the program, the United Church challenges its people to bring an offering in 1963, and again in 1964. Sunday, October 27, has been designated for the 1963 ingathering of gifts, although your church may decide that another day is more convenient.

The offering will be part of a service of worship for racial justice now and will serve as an act of confession and repentance. At this time members of the church will dedicate their substance and energy toward erasing this evil for which God's judgment has come heavily upon us.

In money alone, the program to which our church is pledged might well require one million dollars over the two-year period. And so this will mean extra giving on the part of those truly concerned. Perhaps your youth group may wish to make an extra effort in your giving. Some may wish to dedicate Christ's Workday gifts to this special offering on October 27.

***shall
we
still
betray
our
Lord
?***

racial justice now



Here's what makes me angry when

The daily newspaper is our major means of knowing what's going on in our town, in our nation, and in our world. What thoughts and impressions go through the minds and hearts of teens as they read the daily news? We asked them. And the following are typical answers. *The thing that makes me most angry when I'm reading about the daily news is:*

"The way most newspapers play up the bad actions of teenagers and seem to completely ignore the fact that there is also some good to say about us." (Joann Schmidt, 16, Manhattan, Ill.)

"The over-criticizing of teenagers. I feel the reporters make an article about teen-age trouble sound worse than it really is. This gives all the teenagers a bad name." (Lonnie Clark, 15, Marblehead, Mass.)

"That teenagers are always getting in accidents because of drinking or speeding and throwing a bad impression on all other teen-age drivers who drive safely." (Dave Filler, 16, Ft. Wayne, Ind.)

"The lack of pure factual reporting. All too often I find myself led around by the whims of some reporter. In my opinion the news should contain the facts, the editorial page the personal beliefs." (John Parkyn, La Crosse, Wis.)

"The great amount of subjectivity used in news articles. This often causes the reader to form an opinion

before he has all the facts." (Linda Marsh, 16, Princeton, Ill.)

"That every article I've read where I have known or seen the event myself, has had some error and one recent front page article was so slanted and distorted that it was unbearable! It makes me wonder about the accuracy of other articles about which I know nothing of the event until I read it in the paper." (Connie Crooker, 16, Rutland, Mass.)

"The opinionated political viewpoint of our paper and the way it influences the reports of the news and seeps into the reports themselves." (Jayne Wolgamott, 17, Melbourne, Iowa.)

"The lack of national news in the daily papers put out by San Francisco and the Bay area." (Cynthia Ellsworth, 18, San Carlos, Calif.)

"That people in the South can stand by and as Christians do nothing to help a fellow human being gain his right to dignity." (Peggy Swain, 17, St. Paul, Minn.)

"When the American whites declare themselves almighty and superior to any other race by mistreating their colored fellow Americans so unjustly." (Terrill Chock, 15, Hilo, Hawaii)

"The demonstrations the Negro must put on to gain his freedom. It seems to me their freedom should be as natural to them as it is to us." (Robbi Rustin, 16, Southern Pines, N. C.)

"People who don't live in the South and don't understand the

ad the daily news

feelings of Southerners toward integration to say we should be forced if necessary to integrate our schools and public buildings." (Martha Jaster, 17, Waco, Texas)

"The manner in which demagogues and, in all honesty, even church leaders, attempt to obtain equal rights for man at the risk of losing rationality and responsibility." (Hubie Young 18, Suffolk, Va.)

"That everyone is so afraid that the next fellow is getting more than he is." (Bobbi Walker, 17, Tulsa, Okla.)

"People! How foolish and ignorant they can be. Why don't they try to learn a little about something before they say something about it?" (Leonard Wiese, 17, Rhodes, Iowa)

"Its extreme emphasis upon the absurd and the useless. The 'absurd' includes escape mechanism (dope, alcohol, sex, etc.). The 'useless' includes movie stars and other fake images put before America to infantilize teenagers." (Marcia Kuper, 18, Columbus, Nebr.)

"That in the newspaper I see the total inability of communication in our society and the values of society which would give that affairs of Liz Taylor precedence over human need." (Sandra Silverberg, 17, Sturbridge, Mass.)

"That the Communists can be so very cruel to people. It also makes me mad when I read that the United States has 'backed down' to Russia, even if only in the slightest way." (Vicky Woods, 18, Buda, Ill.)



... when headlines irk

"The way the Communists go into all the underprivileged countries and cheat them while trying to change them to Communists." (*Stephanie Dorn, 17, St. Louis, Mo.*)

"The foolish editorials written by members and advocates of 'fright groups,' such as the John Birch Society, etc. I fail to see any constructive criticism or Christian thinking in such material. It is all just trash." (*Denny Smith, 17, Hayward, Calif.*)

"The level to which man's ethical values have sunk. Anything is all right until you are caught at it. And in many instances, the United States' hands are just as dirty as everyone else's." (*Bob Winter, 17, South Miami, Fla.*)

"The lack of human understanding, perception, and compassion, and the emphasis on cold, calculating politics and power-grabbing in public affairs." (*Joe Meyer, 18, Denver, Colo.*)

"The exploitation of crimes committed by teenagers or adults under 30. Also the daily news media can definitely share a portion of the blame for racial discrimination. In most places, the corruption of the local government is usually condoned by the newspapers." (*Brenda Sims, 16, North Olmstead, Ohio*)

"Incidents in which farmers are not satisfied with the ways in which the market is treating them. For example, NFO actions, opinions, and accusations." (*Tom Hughes, 17, Fredericksburg, Iowa*)

"That our journalists are censored on their news items. Our Bill of Rights specifically states freedom of the press. Government censorship, too, is restricted." (*Dianne Deutscher, 17, Valley City, Ohio*)

"That almost everything you read is something of violence or death. Newspapers hardly ever tell of anything interesting and yet good news." (*Betty Gliessner, 16, Louisville, Ky.*)

"The lack of comprehensive reporting and the trend towards sensationalism in far too many American papers." (*John Robert Kernodle, Jr., 18, Burlington, N. C.*)

"We seem to always read about the disrespectful side of life. We never seem to read about the good side of life." (*Don Bubbenzer, 17, Oaktown, Ind.*)

"The way the newspapers show all good news to the back of the paper. There are many good and worthwhile happenings, why should we have to search for them?" (*Ellen Kolman, 17, Metairie, La.*) ▼

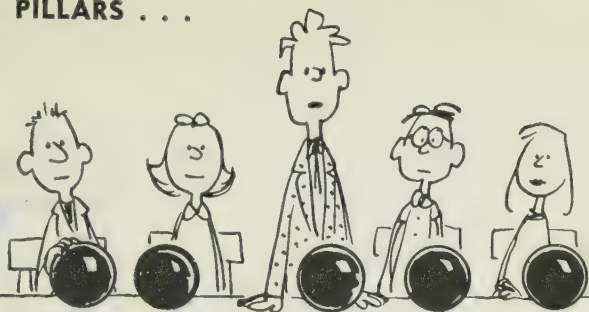
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YOUNG PILLARS . . .



Our panel discussion tonight will be on the meaning of the 12th chapter of Revelation after which our entire group will go bowling!"

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We apologize for the lateness of this issue of YOUTH magazine. Originally scheduled for this September 15 issue was our special report on the human rights struggle within our nation. But at the last minute we postponed this special report until October. Thus the delay in the production of this September 15 issue.

If all goes according to plans, the next issue of YOUTH, dated September 29, will be our special 68-page report on "Man and His Religions," written and photographed by Joseph Nettis. The United Church Press is publishing this special report on world religions in a paper-back edition available in denominational bookstores.

Also on the planning board for the future are special issues on such themes as teens and money, physical fitness and health, science and religion, modern art, food and hunger, India, the city, the Olympics, and the Bible for today. If you have a pet theme you'd like for us to tackle, drop us a line.

let's go . . . anywhere!

. . . in church groups, there's a lot more searching to be done

A dull subject came alive at an Ohio planning and training conference for teens. "How do you improve the local youth program in your church?" was the question. And the answer was a satirical musical skit showing how badly most youth groups are in need of improvement. Gale Kramer of Cleveland wrote the script and arranged the music for "Let's Go—Anywhere!" (Excerpts follow these pages.) A cast of Ohio youth played it cool. The cryptic script satirized the adult who does not understand, the church which does not care, and teens who will not be moved. Satire is fun but also truthful. As the final chorus ended, everyone was ready to dig in new ways and attitudes for making their own youth ministry more relevant. Do any of these lines sound like your group?

JOHNNY: Well, who's "us" anyway?

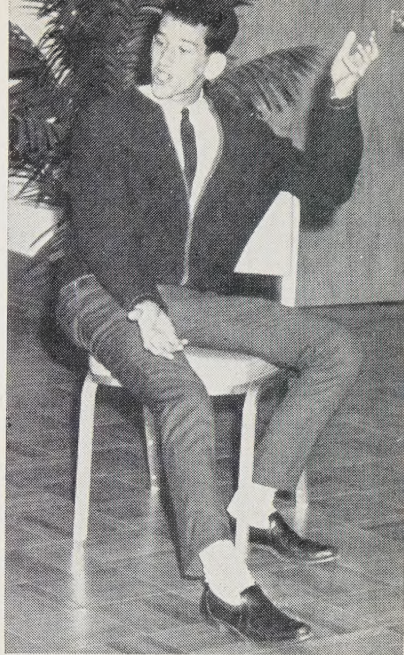
TOM (*pat answer*): We are a cultural society, or if you prefer a societal culture, the ramification of an affluent society, mercenary and materialistic in nature, technologically sound, sociologically progressive, and theologically dead. We are dependent on our peers, estranged from our parents, and conformists before our time. That's "us"—youth.



JOHNNY: What do you do in your meetings? Have you any purpose?

BUDDY: Hey, Johnny wants to know the purpose of this club. Somebody that knows, tell him.

RACHEL (*pat answer*): We are dedicated to the sharing of neutral ideas, uncaused programs, and harmless purposes, among individuals whose identities are sufficiently merged in local, regional, and national committees as to ensure their complete conformity. We advocate the removal of all stumbling blocks and other challenges from the path of the group, and we hope to make life easier for us physically, emotionally, and psychologically.



GROUP SINGS (*tune—"In Christ There Is No East or West"*):

1. In us there is no wrong or bad,
We follow all the rules.
Whoever said that life is hard
Was surely kin to fools.
2. In us there are no far-off goals,
No dying worlds to fight;
As long as you think just like me,
We get along all right.
3. In us we find real happiness,
In us is all we need,
We're happy in our little group
Where love and friendship breed.
4. Join hands, then, members of the group.
What have we got to lose?
As long as challenge never knocks
We never have to choose.

RACHEL (*stands*): Does anybody have any good, pertinent, harmless ideas
(*tune—"Green Grow the Rushes Ho!"*)

BUDDY (*singing*): I'll sing you one-ho!

CHORUS: Let all your homework go!
What is your one-ho?

BUDDY: Cheating's fun and can be done and evermore shall be so.
Two, two the midnight oil never more to see ho!
Three for the ponies in my desk.
Four for the crib sheet markers!
Five for the notes that circulate.
Six for the six blind monitors.
I'll sing your seven ho!

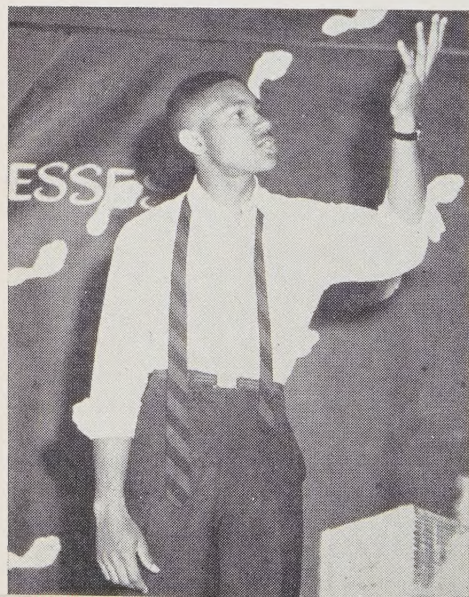
I'm all tired out. Can anymore think of anymore? . . .

RACHEL: Hurry up! The ice cream is melting!

SUE: Uh, could we sing hymn No. 101, "I Want a Church"?

CHORUS (*tune—"I Want a Girl"*):

I want a church, just like the church that I was brought up in
I loved it so, good old status quo, where action was a sin.
A good old-fashioned church with fellowship—
Our Easter crowds would really make you flip—
Oh, I want a church, just like the church that I was brought up in



KATHY: When do we eat, I'm starved?

BUDDY: Right now. Does that answer your question?
(*all rush off leaving Johnny scratching his head*)

JOHNNY: Answer your question? Answers! Answers! That's all this group has. All the answers but none of the right questions. I guess grown-ups have nothing on us. There's a lot more searching yet to be done by teens. But how can I find the way? I'm the only one.
(*he goes out*)




CHORUS (tune—"Battle Hymn of Republic"):

Rise up, O youth, and come along, for life is growing short,
Get on the new band wagon, put your horse behind the cart,
We don't know where we're going, but it's way past time to start,
So let's go anywhere.

We have no use for the teacher,
We can't understand the preacher,
Our parents won't release us to the world we've come to know.
So LET'S GO ANYWHERE!

After You've Been False to God



My Father;
it's not hard to *sing*,
"I would be true,"
but it is hard to *be* true.
When I was received into
the membership of the church,
I felt it was a holy hour.
I took a holy vow.
I meant to be a faithful Christian—
but that was in church.
It's easy to be loyal to thee in church;
it's hard to be loyal to thee
on Main Street,
in the school corridor,
at the lunch counter,
when I'm on the highway
with my foot on the throttle.

O God,
I meet thee in church,
but that is not enough.
I need thy friendship at all times
in all places to steady me,
so that, tempted to ignore thy will,
I shall not be false to thee. AMEN.